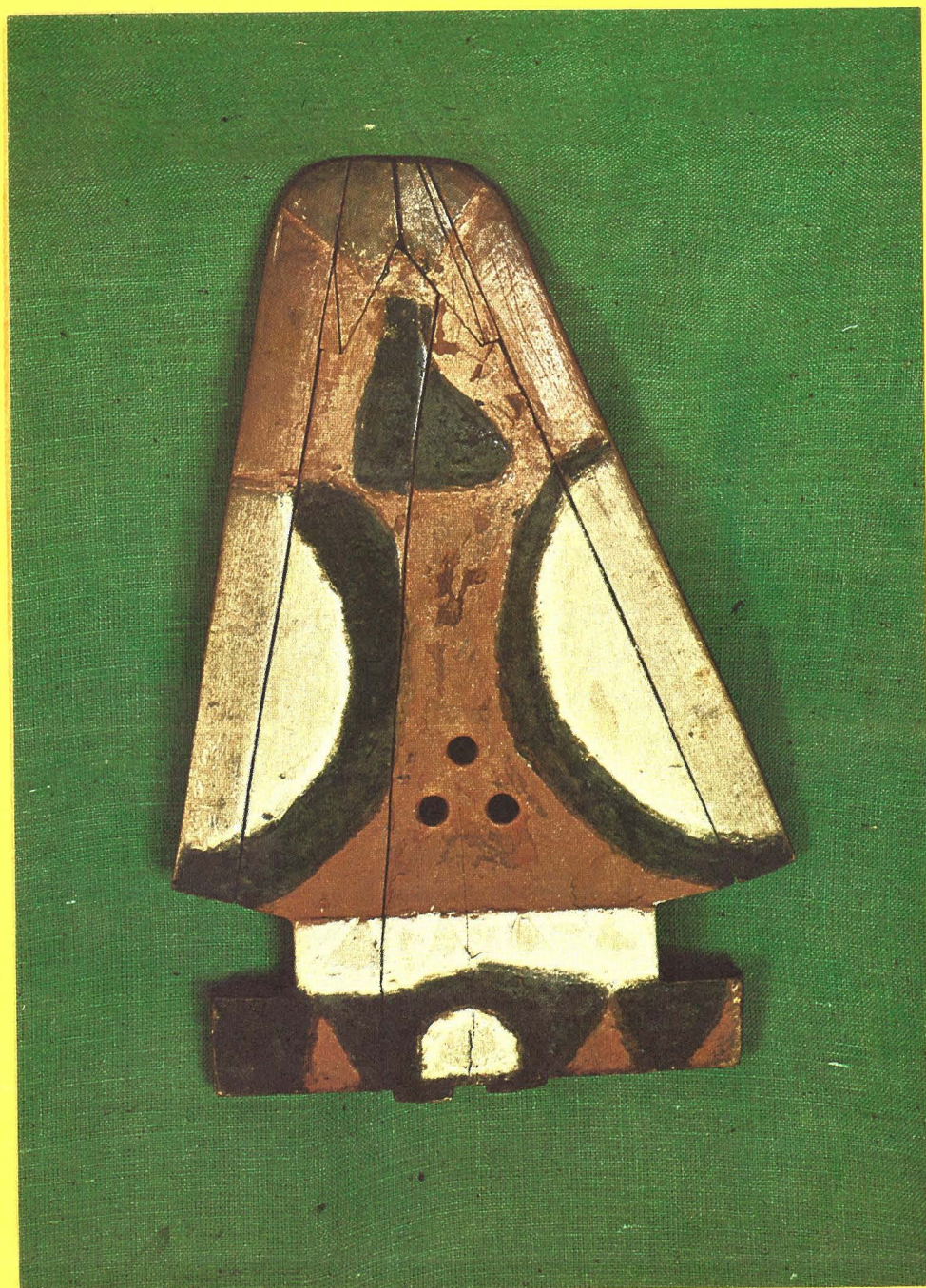


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MUNGER AFRICANA LIBRARY NOTES

Three Dollars

Issue #12

March, 1972

"Dear Franklin..." Letters to President Roosevelt
from Lincoln MacVeagh, U.S. Minister to South Africa 1942-1943

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COVER: Bedu mask. Wood. Bondoukou district, Ivory Coast.
31 inches. Photo by Floyd Clark.

PREFACE

John Seiler sketches the career of Lincoln MacVeagh in his introduction. Seiler, himself, worked on African problems in the American government, acting as Chairman of the African Regional Program of the State Department's Foreign Service Institute in 1963. After his M.A. in African Studies at Boston University, he concentrated on the formulation of U.S. policy towards southern Africa at the University of Connecticut, where his Ph.D. will be awarded in June, 1972.

This issue follows the practice of the Notes to devote at least one issue every year to historical materials. Although these letters are not yet thirty years old, they have an another-generation feel about them while being remarkably prescient. When MacVeagh says, "However distant the affairs of the whites and blacks in South Africa may appear, we shall surely have to take account of them on the other side of the Atlantic some day," he foresees the evolution of American interest in South Africa.

MacVeagh makes some of the most specific references available regarding the training and arming of Africans during World War II. His estimate that Smuts could put 20,000 black infantry into the field touches a subject omitted or glossed over in South African accounts of the war.

Like many Americans, MacVeagh had a deep admiration for the Boer of the frontier and for the Commando leader who became a statesman--Jan Christian Smuts. President Truman shared this admiration of Smuts and once told this editor, with characteristic hyperbole, "Jannie Smuts and I started the United Nations together."

On the other hand, MacVeagh has relatively little understanding of the thrust of Afrikaner Nationalism and appears unaware of the fierce and successful struggle waged by Dr. Malan in resisting the take over of the Nationalists by pro-Nazi elements. But MacVeagh did foresee a basic reason for Malan's upset of Smuts in 1948. Although much preferring the latter, he observed that Malan's "program is perhaps better fitted to the average mentality in this country..."

We are grateful to Mr. Seiler for his research on the "Dear Franklin. . ." letters and for his introduction.

Our appreciation goes also to Dr. Frank Friedel of the Roosevelt Library and to Ambassador MacVeagh's wife and daughter for their cooperation in the publication of these state papers.

E. S. M.

INTRODUCTION

by John Seiler

For Lincoln MacVeagh, South Africa was a brief stop in a long, distinguished diplomatic career, which began almost accidentally in 1933 when Franklin Roosevelt became President. MacVeagh was already 42, with substantial achievements as an editor at Henry Holt and then as founder and president of Dial Press. He had known Roosevelt for some time, took an active part in his 1932 campaign, and offered his services after the election. In large part because of his academic background as a classicist, MacVeagh was appointed Minister to Greece, where he served until the German invasion in 1941. He presented his credentials in Athens in classical Greek, which was reportedly unintelligible to his audience; but he went on from that ambiguous start to receive attention in the State Department for both the quality and the wit of his reporting.

His wartime service was varied: Minister to Iceland, 1941-1942; Minister to South Africa, 1942-1943; Ambassador "near" the exile Greek and Yugoslav Governments in Cairo, 1943-1944. He returned to Greece as Ambassador from 1944-1947. He was instrumental in building Departmental and Congressional support for U.S. aid to Greece--what eventually became the Truman Doctrine. In subsequent Ambassadorial assignments in Portugal (1948-1952) and Spain (1952-1953), he was the pivotal figure in securing base facilities, providing the diplomatic basis for military aid, and prodding a reluctant Portugal to join NATO. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1953 and lived in retirement in Portugal. He died in January 1972.

MacVeagh's five letters to President Roosevelt evoke several kinds of reflections: about his style of diplomatic reporting, about the changing nature of the diplomat-President relationship, and about his views of South Africa.

The trenchant character of MacVeagh's perceptions and style will be readily apparent. Despite his short stay in the Union, and the immediate demands of his wartime task, he was quick to observe and pinpoint underlying patterns of South African behavior. Dr. Waldemar B. Campbell (until his recent retirement, a senior State Department officer dealing with South Africa for over twenty years) believes MacVeagh, of all our ministers and ambassadors assigned there, "stands out for combining perceptive observation and

diligent scholarship with literary skill."

But MacVeagh had a more urgent and prosaic responsibility--to bring South African resources to bear on the overall Allied war effort as quickly as possible. Judging from his final letter, he felt that success had been severely limited; but cables flowing between South Africa, Washington, and London make clear that he won over the President (if not the State Department) to his perception of Prime Minister Smuts's need to assuage domestic political pressures by maintaining (or, at the very least, appearing to maintain) gold production, while coal and chromite production were expanded. For his work in coordinating Allied efforts, he was awarded a Departmental commendation.

While I have found no evidence of Presidential replies to these letters, there are indirect signs that they were read attentively. First is the above-mentioned decision to acknowledge Smuts's domestic political problems. Second, the President passed on one letter each to Harry Hopkins and Under Secretary of State Edward Stettinius. They, as well as the President, were probably too preoccupied to respond to what were (in the context of World War II) at most marginal concerns. But from other sources, Roosevelt's regard for Smuts emerges clearly: they exchanged postage stamps and strategic schemes; and Smuts had even proposed a reclamation scheme for the American Dust Bowl based on the use of a prolific South African grass, which, regrettably, Agriculture Department technicians decided would be toxic to cattle. The very fact that Hopkins and Stettinius read the letters after the President speaks for the relative informality of ambassadorial access and the special warmth of Roosevelt's ties with MacVeagh. Now, the process would be almost always reversed.

Something should be said of MacVeagh's views of South Africa. In his first letter, he was (as recent archaeological research makes clear) wrong in saying "savagery subsists wholly on the products of the earth's surface", since African mining and use of gold and other metals had been going on in the Phalaborwa area of northern Transvaal since 1000 A.D. Despite the use of the word, "native", he was no racist. His penetrating criticism of both Afrikaner and English communities for their racism (letter four) makes this clear. Indeed, his view of Afrikaners was basically critical, although understanding: his appraisal of Malan, after his 1943 electoral defeat, as "the Satan of the Dutch Paradise Lost", leaves no room for misinterpretation. There is considerable sympathy on his part for Smuts, in his description in letter four

of the General's vitality and range of interests, and in his casting in polar terms in his final letter the Smuts dream of unity, "the dream of a united people and its influence on this continent", against the Opposition dream "of the good old days, a dream of patriarchal white supremacy, Kaffir servitude, and Boer Republican isolation."

The five letters appear exactly as they were written. The originals and related cables are in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York. I appreciate Dr. Campbell's appraisal of the letters and his pointing to one small error of fact: in the fourth letter, Hertzog's "close election" loss to Smuts in 1939 was not that, but a defeat on a parliamentary resolution involving South African participation in the war.



Ambassador Lincoln MacVeagh as he appeared in 1945, shortly after his service as Minister to South Africa.

(Photograph Courtesy
Department of State)

"Dear Franklin. . ." Letters to President Roosevelt
from Lincoln MacVeagh, U.S. Minister to South Africa 1942-1943

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Pretoria, Union of South Africa
Thanksgiving Day, 1942

Dear Franklin:

This is my first letter to you from South Africa. You know, better than most of us, that there are problems here of which America will very likely have to take more account in the future than in the past. They are strange problems, and need a lot of study, but after a diligent month, I feel I can, and should, write you at least my first impressions.

Foremost among the problems I have in mind is that of defense; secondly there is what they call here the "racial" question; thirdly there is the difficult matter of handling the natives; and last, though not least, the economic problem. These are the big issues in all men's minds, and dominate the political scene, but cutting across them there are others of seemingly less importance, but equally vexing, such as the immigration question (quite a cardinal issue in my belief), and the religious problem.

Regarding defense, South Africa is pitifully weak in the prime requisite of man-power. The country is enormous and very sparsely settled, there being only about two million whites, and eight million natives, "cape coloreds", and Indians. Except for a narrow fertile strip between the mountains and the sea in the south and east, the land is largely desert and veld, --almost treeless plains, poorly watered and yielding only scanty pasturage. But mineral deposits render South Africa one of the richest countries in the world. Its physiography accounts for the very moderate population of blacks, since savagery subsists wholly on the products of the earth's surface, which here is arid. But its geology offers the digging white man the dearest prizes of civilized life, and yet the white population is but a drop in the bucket of the country's possibilities.

The reason for this lies, of course, in the history and
character....
The President,
The White House,
Washington.

AIR MAIL

character of the Boers, a tenaciously pastoral and fundamentalist people, who got here first and have dominated the life of the country for centuries--and, despite the Boer War, still dominate it. They have not been able to keep the "outlander" from building Kimberley and Johannesburg under the influence of the overpowering lust for diamonds and gold, nor could they prevent the incurably trading British from developing the ports. But weaker incentives to exploitation they have been able to discourage quite successfully, and since they themselves have no urge to live any other life than that which was found good by the Biblical patriarchs, the presence here of large deposits of coal and iron, as well as substantial ones of chrome, asbestos, manganese, copper, silver, lead and tin, and quantities of rare "base metals," has not led to results which would be normal in another country.

On the basis of its population, the Union should be able to put fifty thousand whites and four hundred thousand natives and coloreds into the field as soldiers. General Smuts has done wonderfully with the whites. He has sent two full divisions to the North, and an expeditionary force of a few thousand men, with planes and armored cars, to Madagascar. He has a third division here in reserve (and also a fourth, but this is mostly "on paper," I am told.) Altogether, counting the necessary auxiliaries, women's organizations, and so forth, he probably has two hundred thousand people in active war service, or almost a tenth of the total white population! But the situation regarding "non-Europeans" (as the term is here) is very different. Most of the natives here--Bantus, Zulus, Basutos, their names are legion--are "first class fighting men", like the Fuzzy-Wuzzies. They all revere the memory of Queen Victoria, and are loyal to the British Crown, which carries on a policy of clemency and enlightenment actually and traditionally in strong contrast with Boer repression, and, at the natives' own desire, continues to this day to administer the great reserves of Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland, though these are surrounded as enclaves by the Union territories. Could this great reservoir of splendid man-power be adequately tapped, the British Colonial armies would be immensely strengthened. But the fear of the native is still strong in the Afrikaner nation, whose greatest holiday is still Dingaan's Day, the anniversary of the overthrow of a Zulu chief. Even Smuts's influence, which has so far carried enough Afrikaners along with him to insure the Empire attachment (their votes being added to those of the regular pro-British minority), has not been sufficient to overcome what almost amounts to the....

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the fanaticism of this fear. When he announced that he would enroll the natives in the Army should the Japanese invade the Union, he was met with a storm of opposition even among his own supporters. He has done what he could in this situation. As you know, "Slim Jannie" (which means, "Slick Johnny" in our language) is nobody's fool. He has without much opposition, enrolled many blacks in the Army Service Corps, and strictly on the quiet, has trained them to shoot, so that my Military Attaché estimates that he could now put twenty battalions (twenty thousand) of black infantry into the field and increase his artillery strength by about twenty-five hundred men. In addition, black servicing crews for the anti-aircraft guns in the ports are reported to be trained gunners as well. But all this is very little indeed, compared with the possibilities, and the South African military force remains but a fraction of what it might be. As to its present dispositions, the better part of it is thousands of miles away in North Africa, and its reserves in the Union are so distributed that should the Axis over-run Portugal, or force her to come in on its side, Portuguese East Africa, always a strategic menace to the Union, might be quickly taken over. Otherwise there is little to be said for South African defense measures. The local air force has only about a hundred pursuit planes, with bombers considerably fewer. The ports are most feebly guarded. Cape Town has a small harbor enclosed by moles, and a vast roadstead like that at Reykjavik but without even the submarine loop which we used in the latter place to detect approach. Coastal guns and anti-aircraft batteries are few and far between. At Durban, by far the most important commercial port, oil storage tanks have actually been located in the most conspicuous position available. Naval defense is likewise weak, the South African naval forces contributing only a few light vessels to the small British groupment at Simonstown, a base only a fraction the size one would expect from its celebrity. German submarines have accordingly found the Cape area, once they got round to it, a very happy hunting-ground indeed. When our ship arrived at Cape Town, after dodging up from the Southwest with seven thousand Americans aboard, my Naval Attaché met me with a list of fourteen vessels sunk in that area within a week.

The "racial problem" in South Africa doesn't mean a racial problem, strictly speaking, at all. Boers and British belong to the same race, but the "racial problem" here is nevertheless understood to mean the problem of British-Boer relations. It is historical and psychological, not biological, and therefore perhaps
not....

AIR MAIL

not fundamental, but it bulks larger than all the other South African perplexities in the mind of men and women. Actually it is of fairly recent origin, too. Within your lifetime and mine, Boer and British got along well enough together, where they were living together, mostly in the Cape Province. Then came the Jameson Raid, and hinc illae lacrymae; a small matter, but, like the eating of an apple in Paradise, the origin of a great curse. That ill-considered attempt to foist Rhode's imperialism forcibly on the Boer Republic, already infested with exploiting foreigners (not British only) on the Rand, sowed a distrust and dislike of Britain which is powerful and widespread even today, --the Boer mind being tenacious, like the Irish-- and caused antagonism between Boer and Briton even at the Cape. After that came the Boer War and Kitchener's devastations, and then, last but not least, the British policy of attempted understanding and conciliation, which left the British the victors of the war, but the Boers the victors of the peace. The opportunities afforded by this policy have been exploited continuously for a generation by Afrikaner leaders, who, with the bulk of the Boer majority behind them, have all but prevented the more liberal leaders, such as Botha and Smuts (supported by the British minority en bloc) from carrying on with the Empire connection. Furthermore, the overmastering anti-Britishism of the typical Boer has provided a wonderful breeding ground for foreign propaganda of an anti-British nature. Of most kinds of propaganda he takes but little account, being resistant to novelty in any form. There is no use, for instance, in trying to stir him up about Holland's present sufferings--he broke away from his parent country centuries ago, and his long memory tells him that the break was due to the unjust exactions of the Dutch East India Company. The only propaganda which will really reach him is the kind that touches him immediately and narrowly in his own home. Thus we Americans woo him by showing that we are helping to preserve his cherished independence, while the German radio suggests that we are here in pursuance of "imperialistic" designs. But stronger still is the appeal to his hates--since he is really an Old Testament person--and great masses of him are pro-German today merely to the extent that they enjoy seeing their old enemies, the British, take a beating. Aside from a very small minority, including some people of German origin and the more active members of certain "cultural" societies organized on Nazi models, it may be doubted whether any South African pro-Germans really want to see such an Axis victory as would bring the Germans here. More important for the future would appear to be another phase of the "racial question,"....

AIR MAIL

question," namely, the Afrikaner cultural movement initiated by the Nationalist leaders in the post-Boer War period and now flourishing with schools and colleges of its own. Here is something like the Celtic revival in Ireland, and its results would seem to be equally pernicious as regards "racial" understanding. While intermarriage, the gradual recession of the Boer War into history, the joint war service of Afrikaner and Britisher on foreign fronts, and the inevitable emergence of new problems, economic and social, should in time render the "racial" issue obsolete, the influence on the younger generation of the narrow-minded "patriotic" pundits of Pretoria, Stellenbosch, and other Afrikaner centers of "learning," tends potently to keep it alive.

The native question is also all involved with history and psychology. The British here have reacted to the natives in the traditional British fashion, with a policy of enlightened self-interest. Nothing could be further from the Boer attitude, which one would hesitate to believe could still exist in our time, unless one saw it with one's own eyes. This attitude is frankly that God created the blacks inferior to the whites and any attempt to render them equal is sinful. Historically it must be remembered that the Dutch "Vortrekkers" suffered far more from the cruelty of the natives than the British who came after them; and psychologically, the long memory and narrow-minded intransigence of the Boer contrasts sharply with the British willingness to forgive and forget in the service of the main chance. The present South African policy, in the hands of the liberal Smutsites and their British supporters, now marches hand in hand with the Empire policy administered here by the High Commissioner, who runs the Native Reserves. It comprises the conversion, education and enfranchisement of the native, with a view to raising his standard of living, and incidentally increasing the potential market for British and British-financed South African industry. But at every turn it meets the fanatical opposition of the Nationalists and other wholly Afrikaner parties, which demand that the native be kept "in his place" lest, having eaten of the tree of knowledge he become as one of us. This is the single subject on which the political opposition here is completely united, and as this opposition is almost the equal of the government group when all noses are counted, the "betterment" of the non-Europeans is proceeding but slowly. Indians as well as natives and mulattoes are included in the color bar. Of the Indians, there are some quarter of a million, mostly in Natal. Gandhi took his political rise here, as you know, and the South African Indians, originally imported....

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imported to work on the sugar plantations along the east coast, are now producing many professional men. But possibly because of that same Gandhi, they seem to be receiving the worst deal of all the "colored" races. Sir Sha'at Khan, the Indian High Commissioner, has told me that the British, so liberal to the natives, are even harder on his people than are the Boers.

On the economic front, the diamond and gold rushes opened up this country to industry, but the tenacity of the politically dominant pastoral Boers succeeded in limiting this opening almost wholly to these two products, and now that diamonds have been overproduced and most of the diamond mines are inactive, the industrial and financial life of the nation is concentrated on the Rand. From the earliest times, when Kruger was so hard on them, the gold exploiters have been "outlanders," and even today profits mostly flow into English coffers. Taxes on this great industry account for a large part of the Union's running expenses, but little if any goes into building up other industries. Something has been done to develop steel, under the pressure of the war, and some munitions for North Africa are being made here now. This may help by setting a pace for the future, but normally speaking the infant industries of South Africa cannot properly be called infant at all, since infants grow. The enterprise necessary to nourish them is forthcoming neither from the local people nor from the London magnates. Hence the intervention of our Board of Economic Warfare, which at least for the war period, and for the benefit of the United Nations, is doing its best to see that somehow nourishment is provided. Most thinking men in the Union agree that the country's dependence on one industry is a bad thing, but fear politically to disturb a sacred cow. More reasonably, there are those who point out the difficulty of diverting native labor, trained for gold mining, to other enterprises hundreds of miles away, and the fact that the existing railway system, which grew along with the industrial concentration at Johannesburg, is not fitted to handle a dispersed effort. Altogether, while a splendid case can be made out theoretically for slowing down on gold production and building up a whole host of enterprises on the basis of extraordinarily favorable mineral deposits, it is clear that there are many practical problems, created by the historical development of the country and the peculiar character of the inhabitants, which must be solved in ambulando. In this connection, a plan which I understand has been elaborated in Washington, for Anglo-American "assistance" to South Africa based on a shutting down of the less productive gold-mines, increased productivity
in....

AIR MAIL

in the others, and division of labor from the former to other industries, may have some chance of success. But here again it must be noted that the initiative comes from the "outlander," and whether such a plan can be sold to the Boers is still a question. The Boer character is still capable of making history here. General Smuts, a Boer himself, knows this well and, in handling his country for the Empire, handles it like a Boer--which accounts for much which seems strange to us, such as his refusal to set up anything like an F.B.I. here to take care of a very loose security situation. Generally speaking, the Boer character is averse to anything new-fangled, and would rather die under a treatment of herbs and simples than survive by grace of a synthetic pill.

The political situation here is affected by all these problems. The present Government, under General Smuts, came to power on the neutrality issue, succeeding the "Fusion" government of General Hertzog, who wished South Africa to stay out of the war. Through the dark days of British defeat, it maintained, just as it originally won, its power, through the personal prestige and leadership of General Smuts. Allied successes have now given it, however, additional security, and should they continue, may well carry it into the post-war period, even should General Smuts die suddenly, as General Hertzog has just done. Up to recently the death of General Smuts would have thrown the whole question of South Africa's participation in the war once more into the balance. Now, even without him, his lieutenants might expect to continue on the basis of the brilliant justification which events are giving to his war policy. Furthermore the opposition parties are at odds among themselves on nearly every issue, while the leaders of all have at one time or another predicted German victory. They are now all dodging to cover on this question, sniping at each other as they go. Chief among them are Dr. Malan, an ex-pastor, or "predikant," of the Dutch Reformed Church, and Dr. Pirow, a brilliant German-South African, who as Defense Minister in the Fusion Government brought South Africa up to the very eve of the war with almost no defenses at all. These two men are potent campaigners and powerful political spell-binders, but essentially factional in their leadership. Both were lieutenants of Hertzog, and broke away from him and pulled him down, but neither can take his place as a great South African around whom all the opposition groups might, in certain circumstances, unite. In my view, at least, the opposition has lost in General Hertzog, shorn though he was of all but a remnant of his immediate following....

AIR MAIL

following, its most valuable asset. Meanwhile the United Party still has General Smuts.

While the "racial" problem and the war issue dominate politics now, however, the politics of the future seem likely to be more concerned with the native question and economics. The final triumph of the Smuts policies--pro-war and pro-Empire--which allied victory would bring, might very well put the quietus on many of the old issues now dear to the opposition--neutrality, independence, pro-Germanism, "new order", "Boer republic," and so forth. But when peace is made, there will be bills to pay and men to find work for, and if the United Nations have won the war with the help of South Africa, South Africa will have to take her share in elaborating the new "charters" to prevent more wars, one of which may well be a charter for Africa and all her peoples. Whatever solution is given to the Indian question will also inevitably affect this country. General Smuts now has the support not only of his personal following but of the Dominion (or British "Jingo") party and the Labor party. But the Labor party is anti-Indian, and the Labor party is certain to grow in power and independence after the war, when the boys come home. On the other hand, it may be said that if this country is to grow industrially in proportion to its potentialities, at the same time that the native's standard of living is raised without danger to white supremacy, --which is the only possible road of progress, --the present ban on immigration must be lifted, and Europeans not only permitted to come but enticed in great numbers to these shores. At present, while Boer prejudice jealously limits immigration lest the existing Boer-British proportion of 60-40 percent one day find itself reversed, the blacks are outbreeding the whites at a great rate. But it is not to be expected that the sons of the Voortrekkers, who regard this country as their own, will easily let down the bars which keep it so. It may be, and I believe is, the manifest destiny of this country to grow, as a white man's country, into a powerful industrialized modern state, but the road to fruition will be difficult, and not only the government which survives the war but others after it are likely to litter it with their wreckage.

Of all men on earth, I doubt if any is more unreasoning and stiff-necked than the typical Boer, even his traditional courage sharing in these qualities. As you have seen, my "first impressions" of South Africa have reference continually to his character, which one must. . . .

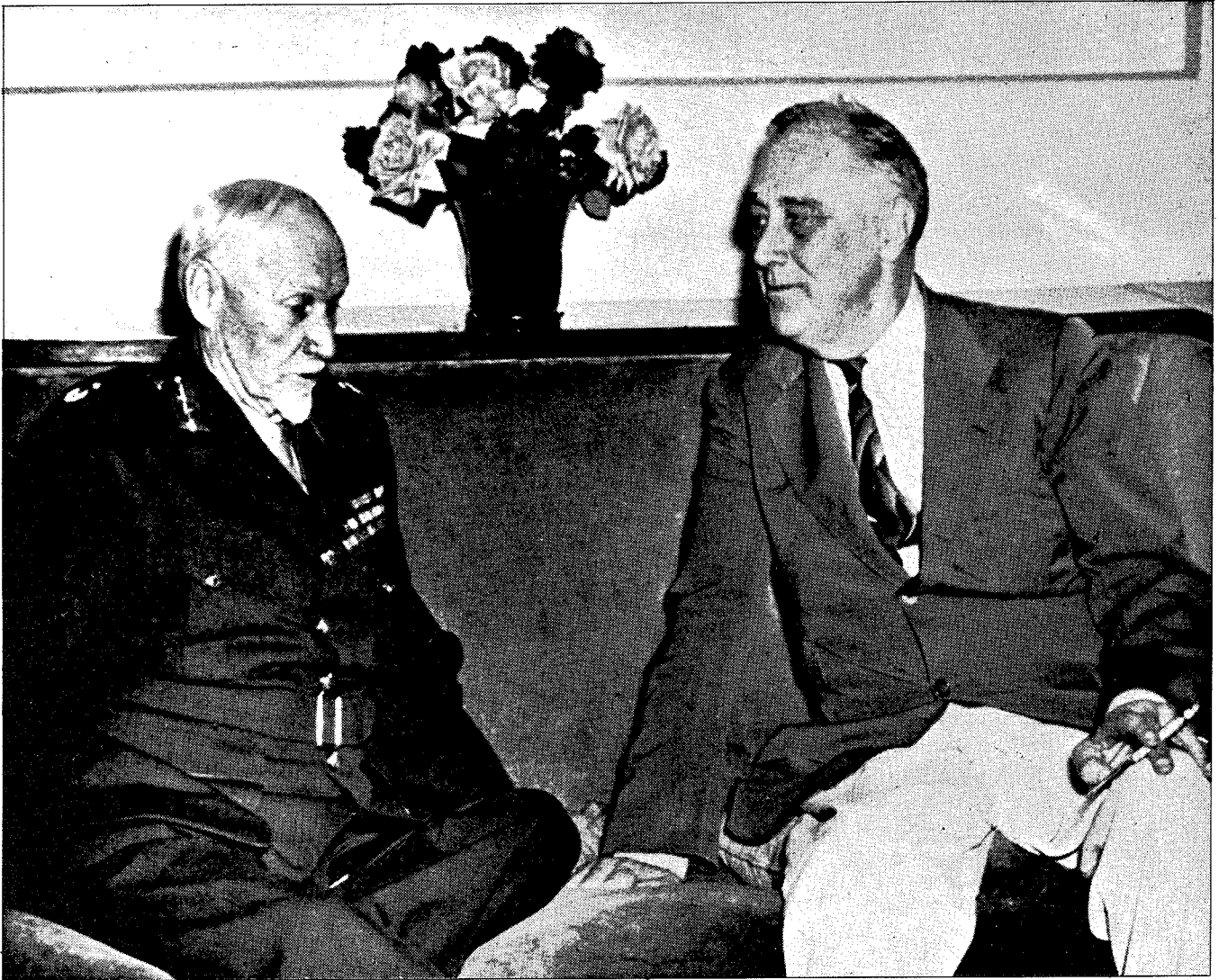
AIR MAIL

must respect but cannot wholly admire. Especially is this true of his religious character, which is something particularly baffling to the average foreigner. My assistant Military Attaché wrote recently, in a report which was well-documented as well as clever, "The chief characteristic of the Dutch Reformed Church is hypocrisy." If this is true, however, then the hypocrisy is unconscious, and the more deadly for being so. The predikants are given to politics just as the Hebrew prophets were, believing that in serving the best interests of the people they are serving God as well. No one can quarrel with them for this. The Greek Church, under Turkish rule, kept the Greek nation alive, as we praise it for so doing. The trouble with the predikants lies in the interpretation which they give to the "Best interests of the people," which is substantially that they should look for their future only in their past. Since the narrowness of this doctrine fits in perfectly with the character of both preacher and congregation, the church has enormous power. Particularly strong in the undeveloped country districts, it has produced a leader of almost national proportions in Dr. Malan, who has actually stated publicly that God created the blacks to be subject to the whites. It persistently impedes the solution along cooperative, liberal, and progressive lines of every one of the problems I have discussed in this letter, and judging by the vitality of the character which it both expresses and reinforces, will continue to do so for years to come.

This is the best I can do with the few glimpses I have so far had of the South African scene. I have had to spend a good deal of time trying to bring cohesion and cooperation into the chaos of a rapidly growing Mission scattered over a very large and poorly coordinated country. But I will spare you details of this. The South Africans I have met are real people, --big, friendly men with a sense of humor; kindly, practical women of decent standards. The attitude to the United States is neighborly, often admiring, a bit, perhaps, on the expectant side, but refreshingly lacking in suspicion to one who has just come from Iceland. We appear to be both liked and trusted, and German allegations as to our imperialistic designs, echoed by Dr. Malan, have fallen quite wide of the mark. At the same time, these people are slower to move than we are and just as proud. It will not do to jostle them, or attempt to dictate to them, for under the skin of every man-jack of them, whether he follow Smuts or another, there is a lot of old Kruger still.

Affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh



President Roosevelt and Field Marshal Smuts talking
in Cairo at the time of the Teheran Conference

Pretoria,
Christmas Day, 1942

Dear Franklin:

Following my Thanksgiving letter, here is another one on the subject of South Africa.

The High Commissioners here--for Great Britain, Canada, and India--are not rated on the same plane with Diplomatic Chiefs of Mission, from the point of view of protocol, but for all that, the British High Commissioner remains the most important personage amongst us. The present incumbent of the post is one, Lord Harlech, a former Colonial Secretary of long service in Parliament and in the Government, who is as outstanding among our local diplomats as his job is beyond theirs in range and complexity. Shortly after I wrote you, he sent me a copy of a letter he had himself just written, which covers practically the same ground as mine, being intended to enlighten the new Governor General of Southern Rhodesia regarding the problems of the Union. It is of course private, and he says he would be hanged if it were made public, but I have asked him, and he has no objections to my quoting it to you. I am tempted to do so not only because some of his ideas resemble those which I tried to express to you myself out of the depths of inexperience, but because of the revelation he makes of how Britain is thinking of South Africa today.

Lord Harlech sees a troubled future ahead for this country. In his note enclosing the copy of his letter, he writes, "I am only here for the 'duration' of the war and shall be gone when most of the troubles I see lurking ahead will come on South Africa," and in the letter itself, after a brief eulogy of the scenery, he speaks at once of the "strains and stresses, the doubts and disturbing reflections that lie beneath." He speaks of the fact that "South Africa would have remained a poor and backward country but for its varied mineral resources," and describes how "economics enters into factors which make for division between the European elements of South Africa's population," the mines, banking business and the engineering professions being "largely in non-Afrikaner hands." He tells of the political power of the Dutch Reformed church, and...

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

and how "the two citadels of Afrikaner Nationalist isolationism are the Dutch Reformed Church and Negrophobia." He puts in a note about the Calvinist French Huguenot element in Afrikanerdom, of which I made no mention in my letter, since its influence on South African problems only reinforces that of the Calvinistic Dutch element and in itself creates no problem of its own, though it is historically interesting as a survival. (Many of the best known South African names are of Huguenot origin--de Villiers, de Wet, du Toit, Pienaar (originally Pinard), etc.) The following is especially good: "The Dutch Reformed Church is still rigidly Calvinistic. Its inspiration is the Old Testament rather than the New. The historical books of the Old Testament, particularly, Genesis, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings are for Afrikanerdom the literal Word of God, and for loyal Afrikaners the interpretation of those books by the synods of the Dutch Reformed Church are the only way of life and conduct and politics that will ensure escape from the torments of hell in a personal and corporeal future life after death. Clericalism is an all-important feature of South African life, controlling and directing education, family life and personal relations, particularly in the country districts. The predikants are still a power in the land. All elements of Afrikanerdom, except the most recently arrived Germans, have long since severed any sentiment towards the lands of their fathers in Europe." And this also: "Perhaps the most serious factor looking to the future is the educational segregation at all stages from the elementary to the secondary schools up to and including the universities. So far from any element in the educational complex making for greater unity among the white races in South Africa, the segregation of youth into Afrikaners and non-Afrikaners, and the attitude of the teachers and the 'single medium' schools is tending to widen the gulf."

So far, Lord Harlech does little more than expand with authority some points which I made myself in my letter to you. But he makes frequent mention of the Jews, whom I left out of my briefer account. There is a Jewish problem here, of course, as everywhere, but specifically as a Jewish problem it would seem still to be relatively insignificant, though resentment of Jewish intrusion into every line of business, particularly real-estate, is growing. At present, the Jewish problem would seem important principally as an aggravation of the general "racial" problem of British versus Boer, the Jews being, along with the Britishers, "mainly town-dwellers and on an average far more wealthy than the average Afrikaner." The Jew in South Africa has hitherto been,
and....

and still largely is, hated less as a Jew than as the "outlander" par excellence, the man most exclusively and successfully interested in the industrial exploitation of the country, which has always been regarded as wicked by the Boers. It seems to me doubtful that Afrikanerdom will ever rise (or fall) to persecution of the Jews, though if it gets the chance it may still, as Kruger effectually did, render life difficult for the whole "godless" gold-seeking population of the Rand. Where a real Jewish problem per se is more likely to occur is among the non-Afrikaners of whom the Jews themselves form a part. It is there where the wealth lies, and where the typically Jewish exploitation of the exploiter, with its attendant human dangers, would seem to be gradually increasing, so far as the opportunities of a small population permit.

By far the most interesting, and lengthy, part of Lord Harlech's letter, however, has to do with the native problem, --as might be expected from the fact that he administers the local native reserves. He tells how the millions of blacks have no political power or influence whatever, but "are under the absolute power of the white South Africans," who "depend upon them more and more for labour and for the continuance of what would be, without them, an abnormally high standard of European wages and living;" of how "segregation has broken down to such an extent that to revert to it now is quite impracticable;" of how, despite the fact that millions of natives are living de-tribalized, semi-European lives in the native "locations" of South Africa's cities and towns, the native reserves of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland, "so far from being able to accommodate more natives, ought to be enlarged to accommodate their existing population even on subsistence standards of livelihood." In this connection, you may remember what I wrote you about the danger of the white population here being swamped unless white immigration is both permitted, on a greater scale than at present, and encouraged. Lord Harlech then goes on to describe what is being done for the natives, and notes, "educational services for the natives have outrun other badly needed social services and have not been accompanied by the adequate provision of 'opportunities' for the educated except in the teaching profession. This is ill-balanced progress and is inevitably creating a class of frustrated and politically disgruntled native educated proletarians."

"Worser and worser!" as I think it was Alice who said. Lord Harlech goes on, in a paragraph which is certainly worth quoting in full: "More serious than anything for the future of race relations between European and non-European is the statutory industrial color bar. The existence of such a law of the State is due to the presence in South....

South Africa as nowhere else on the African continent (except to a smaller degree in the Rhodesias) of an enfranchised European Wage-earning proletariat haunted by memories of an 'unemployment' problem, and fearing its recurrence unless a large number of jobs are 'reserved' for Europeans only. Nobody nowadays, seeing what Bantu workers are doing today north of the Zambesi--driving railway locomotives, engaging in quite skilled engineering occupations etc.--can any longer maintain that African natives cannot acquire the skill necessary to perform crafts now reserved by law for Europeans only. In South Africa the cost of building, and particularly house building, has been 'put up' against all users including the poorest by the existing colour bars in the building trades. Natives are permitted to become qualified doctors of medicine and to practice surgery but are debarred from becoming most classes (sic) of carpenters and joiners. This sounds fantastic but it is true, and the organized European Labour Party in South Africa is the chief obstacle to the useful and better employment of native labour in industry. Its policy is frankly the maintenance of a class privilege of one section of wage earners against another section of wage earners in State or Capitalistic employ, which would appear to be in flagrant conflict with the fundamental ethics of socialism elsewhere throughout the world."

If one considers this situation together with the existence of "millions of detribalized natives in the native locations of South African cities and towns" and the "class of frustrated and politically disgruntled native educated proletarians," above referred to, the possibilities of trouble ahead for the strictly limited white population of South Africa, now numbering less than one to five among the blacks, are great indeed. "These colour problems," says Lord Harlech, "are the fundamental problems of South Africa, but the Europeans carry on their internecine political warfare among themselves regardless of their non-European background and the trouble slowly but surely being nurtured for future generations." He points out that the economic progress of the country depends on a rise in the productivity and consuming power of the non-European masses of its population, and adds, "But the tendency in South Africa is to approach all problems not from the point of view of economics, and still less social economics, but from the purely political aspect of race relations and the caste privileges of the white section of the community." He notes how the majority of the Afrikaner groups, which desire a republic and severance from the Empire, want to establish Afrikaner ascendancy over all other races, committing themselves to policies which would react on them throughout the continents of Europe and Asia, and comments on the natural gravitation of such "republicans" to the side of Nazi Germany in....

in opposition to "the liberal democratic ideals of Britain and the United States." Finally, his conclusion seems to me as interesting as anything else in his letter. --No wonder he doesn't want to be quoted! -- "It is impossible to think of South Africa as if it were a national state or country in Europe. It is, indeed, sui generis. Its very complexity makes any forecast of its future hazardous. Its continued partnership in the British Commonwealth will always be an uneasy partnership, yet its complete separation would probably turn out to be more injurious, politically as well as economically, to South Africa itself than to any other part of the world including Britain. Its history, like its climate, will always be stormy and uncertain."

All this is a far cry from the old imperialism of the Kipling days. "Raising the consuming power of the native" for the benefit of English trade is still certainly one of the cruder British objectives here, and dovetails in with the effort we feel here to take advantage of lease-lend in such a way as to canalize all local buying through British hands and thus effectively shut out American enterprise after the war. Lord Harlech naturally doesn't mention this, nor does he touch on the present dependence of South Africa on gold production, and the efforts of the controlling British-South African financial interests to keep gold-mining at full blast in our despite. In general he makes no mention of the things in which we are immediately concerned here, defense problems and the war-effort and industrial and commercial problems as these latter are affected by the former. He only passingly mentions politics, which are of interest to us in the same connection. He looks beyond these things to ultimate social questions, in which he thinks we as well as Britain must one day be involved, and shoulder to shoulder, too, to judge by the way the world is developing. He is so convinced that we are already inclining toward taking a hand in the settlement of African problems that he sends me pamphlet after pamphlet on the Empire and its colonial policies, and has impressed on me his belief in regional councils. For myself, I cannot, of course, help remembering the end of the last war, when many European statesmen actually thought that the United States might be willing to take mandates in the Middle East! But I hardly think, either, that after the lessons of this war we shall ever go isolationist totally again. However distant the affairs of the whites and blacks in South Africa may appear, we shall surely have to take account of them on the other side of the Atlantic someday as "the individual withers and the world is more and more"--Hence this exposé by a modern stream-lined liberal Commonwealth. . . .

wealth administrator may be wholly out of place in the letter-bag of a President of the United States.

Affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

Cape Town,
March 25, 1943

Dear Franklin:

Not long after I last wrote you, the South African Government picked up and transferred itself to the Cape, according to its usual custom, for the Parliamentary Session. Now, in the big Union Buildings which Baker, Rhodes' architect, built on the northern slopes of the Pretoria valley, only a few deserted secretaries flit like ghosts. The South African official world and his wife are here, which accounts for the heading on this letter. But they say the Session will be over by Easter, and we'll all go back up-country then.

As you know, owing to provincial jealousies existing at the time of Union (which still persist, of course, to a certain degree today) South Africa has three capitals: the Administrative at Pretoria, the Judicial at Bloemfontein, and the Legislative at Cape Town. In addition, the Commercial capital is unquestionably at Johannesburg.

I said the South African world and his wife are here now. But there is a notable exception. Sir Patrick Duncan, the Governor General, who came out here first as one of Milner's "Kindergarten", and has been a devoted and popular servant of South Africa ever since, is slowly dying, they say of cancer, and he and his wife are still in Pretoria. In his place we have here the Chief Justice administering....

The President
The White House
Washington

administering the Government, a grand old warrior who served with Botha in the Boer War and was Minister of Justice in a former Smuts cabinet.

I shall begin this letter with politics. Parliament is conducted with the utmost formality and decorum, --prayers, wigs, mace, and all, --but the speeches made in it are often outrageously acrimonious, owing to the so-called "racial" feeling between the British and Dutch elements. Happily there is also considerable brilliance among the members, especially the older parliamentarians, and rapid-fire exchanges of wit are rarely lacking even on the dullest subjects. I have found attending the debates amusing as well as instructive.

General Smuts heads a coalition which gives him a majority of about twenty. Besides his own party, the United Party so-called, he has with him the pro-British Dominion Party and the Labor Party. Both of the latter are small but important in view of the strength of the Opposition. This last includes the Nationalists, headed by Dr. Malan, the Afrikaaners, headed by Mr. Havenga, and the New Order Party, headed by Dr. Pirow.

There are seeds of disunity in both groups, but these are more marked in the case of the Opposition. General Smuts came to power on the War issue, against General Hertzog, who enjoyed a personal ascendancy which none of the present Opposition leaders has inherited. For some months past, it has looked as if Smuts had guessed right about the war, and when Allied successes are mentioned in the House, as they are just as often as the Government can manage it, the General's supporters leer across the Chamber in triumph at a dispirited Opposition which sometimes votes all together and sometimes splits. Accordingly, General Smuts, who hardly is ever absent from the floor, and watches for every possible move of Dr. Malan and his friends like a cat at a mouse-hole, has adopted a strategy for this session which stresses the conduct of the war to the virtual exclusion of purely domestic issues, on which debate might prove more precarious. He has struck early and hard for an endorsement of his war policy--with a motion to permit volunteers to serve outside Africa--and got it by the best margin he could expect from the existing line-up. His next effort has been on his budget--a drastic, war-time budget--and got that too on a strictly party vote. But he has consistently refused to consider suggestions for new legislation on social security, native affairs, the Communist "danger", education, and so forth. At present he is coasting along nicely on the adoption of his Budget estimates....

estimates one after the other, while the heathen rage.

The Opposition, on the other hand, apparently realizing the truth of what both General Smuts and his chief lieutenant, Mr. Hofmeyr, the Minister of Finance, have said to me, that "the vote-getting possibilities of opposing the war are over," is concentrating its attack chiefly on domestic issues and claiming that the Government policy of standing pat on these is dangerous in the extreme. As to foreign affairs, it has so far confined itself to elaborating the local evils which it foresees as a result of the United Nations' victory, suggesting that lend-lease, to which the Government is partial, is likely to result in South Africa's being placed "in bondage" to American "imperialism" after fighting "Britain's war," and demanding a rupture of consular relations with the U.S.S.R., on account of alleged machinations of the Soviet tending to stir up the natives against the whites.

Behind all these manoeuvres stands the possibility of early general elections. Under the constitution, these must be held every five years--and this is an election year--but Parliament can postpone them if, in its judgment, a campaign would not be to the country's good. It has been widely suggested that the General might use his majority to postpone them this year "on account of the emergency", and he has not yet definitely denied that he will do so, thus keeping the Opposition guessing. The probabilities would seem, however, to be that he will call for elections just as soon as possible after this Session is over, in order to capitalize promptly on the apparent success of his war policy. Meanwhile, the parliamentary strategy on both sides, apart from the General's specific war and finance measures, which have constructive value in implementing present policies, is definitely pre-election and platform-building in character.

If and when elections are held, the General will probably go to the country on the basis of the accuracy of his predictions about the war, and the South Africans will be asked to give him their suffrage as to a Moses who is leading them surely to the Promised Land. His press is already playing up this point of view. His Opponents, on the other hand, will say, "Never mind all that, but just what is this Promised Land to which he is leading us?" and they will claim that it will be a land in which South Africa must be even less her own mistress than in the past, dominated by Anglo-Saxondom and threatened by Communism. Only by turning out this devil, Smuts, they will say, this traitor who would sell us to the British and (who knows?) to the Americans as well, can we save South Africa from
foreign....

foreign bondage and from internal revolution. The "racial" issue will again be made much of in all its forms and much will be said about Anglo-Saxon liberalism on the color question, as well as about Communist plots. In the former connection a rumor is already popping up from time to time, to the effect that "President Roosevelt intends to establish a native state in Africa after the war."

The above is all predicated, of course, on continued success for the United Nations. If Russia should collapse, or the Germans win in North Africa, or anything else happen to give the Axis plausible hopes of eventually winning the war, General Smuts will almost certainly postpone elections here. Meanwhile home conditions appear to be somewhat deteriorating under the strain of keeping the country at war while the front is thousands of miles away. There are labor troubles, and signs of Native and colored unrest, which must be handled gingerly, at least in advance of elections. Also there are local military troubles which need the same treatment.

As regards the military situation, the General apparently promised the First Division, long ago in Abyssinia, that he would bring it home on leave, and felt that he had to fulfill that promise after Alamein. In any case, the First Division has come home and has been scattered about in the country districts where there is little enthusiasm for the war, and now the men don't want to go north again unless they are paid better and have other concessions made to them. There is a small air-force still up north, but including its members with the others, only about half the enlisted men in the forces have as yet taken the Prime Minister's new oath to serve overseas. To get a division together, the 6th, which could be sent on such service, the authorities have been forced to break up another, the 3rd, which has for some time past been concentrated on the Mozambique border ready for action if Portugal became involved in the war. Units of the 3rd are still in place, but it has been depleted and declassified. South Africa's contribution to the fighting forces of the United Nations, at least for some time to come, is thus likely to be only one division, composed of one armored and one motorized brigade, besides the air force. What can be salvaged out of the 1st Division remains to be seen. The 2nd is captured, the 3rd disrupted, the 4th exists on paper only, and the 5th doesn't exist at all. Defense against submarines continues to be woefully weak and shows no improvement. There are many sinkings off the South African coast whenever U-boats are present, as recently.

Turning now to economics, many imported articles are
hard....

hard to get here in South Africa, and most articles necessary to civilized life are imported. But aside from petrol and tires nothing is rationed, and life goes on very much as in peacetimes. Of war-effort, as we understand the term, there appears very little. One feels tempted to criticize, until one remembers what the Government is up against in connection with the people. Then the war-effort, such as it is, seems somewhat of a miracle. There are actually many boys in the air-force and other combatant units today whose parents are bitter opponents of the war-policy. General Smuts said to me the other day, "If DeValera had joined England in the war he would have been very much in my position today."

I have naturally seen a good deal of the General and his advisers in regard to our supplying South Africa with her essential requirements and getting things from her which we need. In regard to the former, the General has, as you perhaps know, accepted the idea that we and the British should set up a joint council here with the South Africans to decide on programs of supply from Britain and America; and he has admitted, too, the principle that supplies connected with the war effort should be given precedence over all others. But he wants us, on our part, to agree that categories of supplies which he and the South African Government consider essential to South Africa's maximum war effort will be so recognized by our Government agencies, and the Department doesn't want to do this because it would be agreeing to supply the gold mines before any agreement has been reached as to how far the latter are to be limited! I am hoping that some way of meeting the General on this matter may be found, since he is not one to relish being told that his views about his own country are inadmissible and we have a good deal of other business to transact with him. Actually, we already agree, it seems, that some supplies for the gold mines are necessary, and all he wants is a reassurance on this point, which he suggests we might give him in principle without any embarrassing specific reference to gold.

As regards our purchases of South African supplies for the war effort, we have encouraged the production here of chrome and manganese, but have since decided that because of shipping problems and the availability of these two ores elsewhere, we can now cut out South African chrome entirely and reduce manganese orders to a minimum. To the South African Ministry of Mines, this has come as a "blow" which it hopes to "soften" by getting us to accept some sort of compromise. The Board of Economic Warfare people here are working on the matter, but I expect the South African proposals to come through my hands in a few days.

In.

In both cases, --that of supplying the gold mines and that of purchasing chrome and manganese, --our troubles are, from the material point of view, only tempests in a tea-pot. Thus, all the gold mining supplies now provided by us here per annum amount to only a very few average ship-loads, while the local labor to be displaced by stopping chrome shipments from the United States is only 160 white men and 4,000 blacks! But the fact that we have shut down our own gold mining altogether, and the fact that the South African Government has enthusiastically encouraged base metal mining here at our instance, provide aspects under which, from the political point of view, the teapot is considerably enlarged.

More encouraging is the situation regarding coal. Our Government wants the South Africans to step up coal production so that ships returning in ballast from the Indian Ocean can be freighted with this commodity for South America, and thus relieve bottoms now employed in such traffic from the United States and England. The General seized very quickly on the purpose and value of this proposal and I have hopes that despite the necessary local adjustments in labor and rail transportation, some good results will eventuate.

We have long wanted a Lend-Lease mission here to find out how our policy can be more closely and helpfully fitted to existing facts, and such a Mission has now arrived and begun its investigations and discussions. It is too soon to report on its success, but I have little doubt that this will be appreciable. South Africa, of course, now enjoys lend-lease as a Dominion, under the master agreement with England, but it is trying to negotiate a reciprocal agreement in Washington on the general basis of our recent agreements with Australia and New Zealand. Our policy at present seems to be to limit South Africa's lend-lease on credit to finished war supplies, and on a cash basis to other war supplies, on the grounds that she has, thanks to her gold production, a very favorable trade balance; and so far as reciprocal lend-lease is concerned, to demand inclusion of strategic materials in the reciprocation. Early conversations indicate that the South Africans may contest both these proposals on the ground that this country is part of the British Commonwealth of Nations and should not be treated differently from the rest of that group, whose balance of trade as a whole is not favorable and whose strategic materials are accordingly paid for in cash.

In conclusion, I should like to relate this letter more closely to what I have previously written, and perhaps I may best do so by referring again to the color question, which I believe to be the most....

most important of all the many vexing problems of this country. The whole point of the anti-Communist campaign now being cooked-up as an election issue by the Opposition lies in the suggested likely effects of Communism on the dissatisfied mass of color in the Union. Much has already been said in Parliament about this "danger," but when proposals were brought up by one of the few white members representing the Natives, to do something for the colored population which would make it immune to Communist propaganda--namely give it labor rights and real representation--the Government shied off. It would not, said the Minister for Native Affairs, consider any alteration of the existing laws, "lest the problem of native affairs be brought into the forefront of politics"! Sidney WATERSON, who has just returned from being High Commissioner in London, lamented to me later (he is a Minister now, for Commerce), "I should have got up and told the House that there is no use blaming Communist propaganda." Instead of that, however, what he did was to join the vote of confidence in the existing policy of feeding, educating, converting and doctoring without according any of the rights which must be aspired to by an able-bodied, educated, christian and healthy community. The papers have dubbed this policy "a square deal for the Natives," and such flattering unction may soothe for a while the fears which South Africans of all parties feel on the color question. But sooner or later that question must be faced, and the half-hearted measures now hopefully looked-to to avert this necessity are only rendering the problem itself more acute.

Affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

Pretoria, Union of South Africa
May 12, 1943

Dear Franklin:

I am now back in Pretoria, as you see, and the Parliamentary Session, about which I wrote in my last letter, is over. Comment has been general that it was not a lively session, as such things....

The President,
The White House,
Washington

things go in South Africa. Results were quite as expected. As I reported in my last letter, of March 25, the Government passed a Bill allowing it to employ volunteers on military service outside of Africa, and secured a budget sufficient to carry on the war effort for the coming year. Already a small volunteer force has gone to the middle East in the shape of the so-called Sixth Armored Division. Most of the rest of the legislation passed was of a routine domestic character, almost half being financial. In this connection some effort was observable to forestall post-war inflation. The Opposition, in its attacks on the Government, avoided the war issue as far as possible and made much of the perils of communism, particularly in connection with native unrest. It also put forward a lengthy and cumbersome social security program on the plea that the Government has been so busy with foreign affairs that it has neglected domestic welfare. It was clear throughout the session that both sides had more than half their minds on the coming elections, which General Smuts has now stated will "probably" be held in August "in the normal course of events." I have been privately given to understand, however, by his chief political adviser, Mr. Louis Esselen, that they may be held considerably earlier, perhaps about the first week in July.

The political campaign is now getting into full swing. General Smuts is holding his coalition together. It consists of his own "united Party" the largest in the country, plus the small Labor Party (a purely white man's affair since natives cannot vote,) and the so-called Dominion or "Jingo" Party, mostly confined to the British of Natal. The Dominion Party has recently been enjoying eight seats in the House as against 70 for the United Party. Labor has had only 4 seats. Because, however, the Communist Party, which has not hitherto contested a National Election, is posting a dozen candidates in this one, and thus threatens to weaken the Labor Vote, the General has agreed that the United Party will not post candidates in as many as nine constituencies where Labor is doing so, and will support the Labor Candidates in those Constituencies, thus giving the little party a chance of more than doubling its recent representation in Parliament. A similar agreement has been made with the Dominion Party, but only covering the same number of constituencies in which it was successful in the last General Election. Labor influence is growing here but is still far from being the factor it is at home.

On the Opposition side, the situation is very different. Dr. Malan, ex-Predikant, recognised Opposition Leader in the House, and head of the Re-United Party, has been controlling 40 seats. Mr. Havenga, heading the Afrikaner Party, has controlled nine, and Dr. Pirow....

Pirow, with his "New Order," 16. These three parties constitute the divided political heritage of the late General Hertzog, who lost a close election to General Smuts on the Neutrality issue in 1939, as you know. Since the war has taken a turn against the Nazis, the "New Order" group has shown some indecision as to whether it will continue to function as a political party, though it still conducts fascist propaganda and has announced that its members will certainly support any candidates who are anti-Smuts and anti-War. In addition, the smaller Afrikaner Party, being professedly moderate in a country of extremes, appears also to be showing some signs of dissolution. It stems from the more liberal side of the great Hertzog's complex political character, a side which led him at one time to "fuse" with Smuts and eventually drove the bulk of his followers, under Malan, into secession. Some of its remaining members are now joining the United Party, others are turning to Malan, and still others appear to be trying to form a new party of their own together with members of the "New Order" and of the Ossewa Brandwag, a quasi-military secret society, formed on the Nazi model to exploit the anti-British feelings of the Boers. Mr. Havenga has recently tried to make an agreement with Dr. Malan similar to that made with Smuts by Labor and the Jingoos, but has been rebuffed. The good Doctor appears to think that most of the Afrikaners will come to him anyhow once his campaign is launched, and that he therefore needs to make no special gesture towards them. But in the meantime the main body of the Afrikaner party, which still coheres, is deploring his "arrogance" and "lack of leadership" and is posting candidates all over the Union. Thus, as the campaign begins, the Opposition house is divided against itself.

As for the issues, it may be said that the struggle is essentially Smuts versus Malan. Smuts has indicated that his side will chiefly stress the war issue, his rightness in joining the United Nations, as proved by recent events, and the benefits to accrue to South Africa from being among the victors. Malan, on the other hand, will apparently make his chief issue of the danger to this country of being allied with communist and propagandist Russia, where no color-bar is recognised. Smuts will belittle this danger, claim that his Government is vigilant as well as constructive. Malan will say that to participate in victory with the United Nations will be only to participate in pulling England's chestnuts out of the fire, to abet the growth of English and American "Imperialism," and help to spread the influence of Russian communism throughout the world. Minor issues will be interwoven with these, of course. Something may be heard of Lend-Lease, from the Opposition side, as a means adopted by Smuts to "mortgage" or "enslave" South Africa to the United States and....

and England. But this subject is probably too complicated to be made much of on the stump except in very general terms. Certainly the great historical "racial" issue of Boer versus Briton, and the local hatred of England and of Smuts as an English "stooge," will appear at every turn, even if they have to be dragged in by the heels. But mainly the election will turn on whether it is better for South Africa to face the future as one of the victorious United Nations or to retire into a perhaps less glorious but supposedly safer isolationism. Dr. Malan has said that if he is elected he will withdraw the country from participation in the war. This is, of course, pure Hertzogism, and Malan doubtless counts on it to unite behind him the full strength which supported Hertzog, while he adds the fear of communism to give him the added margin to succeed where Hertzog failed. Furthermore, to make his gruel thick and slab and generally more palatable to the platte-land (South African for the "back woods,") he has announced that he aims at the establishment of an independent white republic. Note the "white."

It may not seem that a forthright policy like that of Smuts should have much to fear from a witch-doctor's brew of old prejudices and new phobias. But to South Africa as a whole this war is still very much a "foreign war." Smuts' appeal is to cool reason, sound business sense, and patriotic sentiments, and he idealizes the future. Malan, on the other hand, idealizes the past, and appeals very largely to passions of fear, jealousy, and hatred ancestrally ingrained. His program is perhaps better fitted to the average mentality in this country than that of his opponent. Furthermore he has the backing of the Dutch Reformed Church. If he had a more popular personality and a greater talent for leadership than he actually enjoys, his chance to win upon his backward-facing platform might be very good indeed. As it is, the divisions in the Opposition ranks, not on issues but on personalities, may well be fatal to his cause.

Smuts should win, but he also has to fear the danger of a "split" vote and the opportunities this gives for a minority victory. Thus, the returned soldiers, despite a raise in pay which he has given to the army, are by no means satisfied with home conditions. Not only is there the usual complaint about promotions for those who have never gone to the front, but the soldiers seem to have found the country as a whole disappointingly disinterested in their sacrifice. Many of these men may vote communist. Then there is disaffection among the normal Smutsite colored voters of the Cape, who are restless over what they feel as insufficient liberalism in the Government on the color question. Many of them may abstain from voting. The United Party's machine....

machine, which is the best in the country, is working hard on these problems. Considering the Opposition's disorganized state, the Government doubtless holds a trump card in its ability to spring the elections at an earlier date than expected, but I note that Louis Esselen, who has been called the "Jim Farley" of South Africa, is not sitting back for all that. The election isn't completely in the bag.

In my letters to you from South Africa, I have always had something to say about the color-bar, which I believe to constitute this country's most important and vexing question. Something came up in this connection at the close of the Parliamentary Session and you may have heard of it already, since it has caused some little flurry in the British House of Commons as well as at New Delhi. I refer to the passage of the Indian Restriction Bill, which the Indian Government protested but which the British Government refrained from touching as a purely Dominion affair.

The idea that the passage of this Bill was due to political manoeuvring is fallacious. The Indian High Commissioner has chosen to see it in this light, as it saves his "face" to do so (the British High Commissioner said to me, "One might as well let the poor fellow keep on thinking as he does, since it makes him feel better!") But the truth is that while the Dominion Party, which is chiefly concentrated in Natal where the trouble precipitating the Bill arose, was first to be agitated on the matter, all the representatives of white South Africa, both in the House and the Senate, voted for the Bill, with the exception of three who only abstained from voting and opposed it only in detail. This Bill which, despite Government apologetics, distinctly and drastically discriminates against non-white, under-privileged citizens of South Africa was passed by privileged white South Africans with hardly a dissenting voice.

The Government had no desire to indulge in such legislation at this session, or indeed at any time, since it is unhappily controversial, particularly as regards foreign relations. But the report of a Commission appointed to investigate charges of increasing penetration by Asiatics into so-called European districts in the city of Durban turned out to be so alarming, when it was completed and presented on March 31st, that action could not be averted in the face of the feelings aroused. It appeared that rich Indians had been buying up desirable sites at an enormously increased rate during the past year, and that an existing "gentleman's agreement," where-under the two races were supposed to keep apart, had lost all sense. The Government of India pleaded that the matter of separation be still maintained. . . .

maintained on a voluntary basis, by any means that might be found possible, in view of the principle involved. But public opinion, that is, white public opinion, was frightened. General Smuts himself said in the House, "Durban is a European city and must remain so." The Minister of the Interior said: "Efforts to solve the problem by other than legislative means have failed." To the argument of the local Indians that they must have some place to go, the Minister said that this is up to the Durban City Council, which must provide adequate housing facilities, as well as other amenities, for the non-Europeans and that henceforth the Council would be "on trial" in this respect. The Bill stops all transfers of property, whether on lease or freehold basis, between Europeans and non-Europeans for a period of three years. It also extends for a similar period certain discriminations against the Asiatics in the Transvaal in connection with business licensing. If the conditions against which the legislation is aimed improve sufficiently during the three year period, legislative prohibition may be raised at the end of that time and the principle of voluntary separation again resorted to. The Bill is therefore called a "pegging" Bill and a "standstill agreement." To salve its conscience, the Government has made much of this feature, and has argued that the Bill does not discriminate against the Indians in Durban since it applies equally to both races. But the Native Representatives (the Indians themselves have no representatives, though nearly all were born here and are called citizens) who alone opposed the Bill in Chamber and Senate, easily showed up the fallacy of this. One of them replied bravely, if ineffectively, to General Smuts that, "Durban is not a European city, it is a South African city." The Bill is definitely a segregational measure applied by one portion of the people to another which has had no say in the matter. The Indians did not even get to the bar of the House, though that privilege was asked.

The Opposition was actually more definite than the Government on the question and in this ran true to typical Afrikaner policy. Dr. Malan said that the temporizing policy of pegging was mere "fiddling with the Indian Question." He wanted something more definite and drastic. "Fiddling" may seem extreme, but it has some justification in the fact that what is now called pegging is only too likely to prove a permanent fixation. But in any case, the Government and Opposition showed themselves at one in this, that if the color-bar is not observed by the colored people in this country voluntarily, they must be forced to observe it by legislation in which only the white people share. Progress and liberalism in this matter may be expressed in speeches, but it cannot be expected in fact when the white ox is gored. Similar legislation will certainly be enacted as
and....

and when encroachment by Indians (who generally work harder and make money faster than whites in this country) menace other desirable centers of residence and trade.

To pass to pleasanter subjects, General Smuts is a most delightful companion as well as host. I asked him to luncheon in Cape Town with ten or so of my young men - Assistant Attachés, Vice Consuls and so forth - for the express purpose of giving them a chance to meet him, and he not only accepted with alacrity, but charmed everyone present with his friendly humor. But the people closely around him say he is getting "crotchety," "difficult," and "dictatorial." His wife has recently had a slight shock which has upset him and though he walks up Table Mountain every Sunday when he is at the Cape (a feat like scaling half a dozen Washington Monuments,) leading his husky young guards a merry chase, he is after all 73 years old. Louis Esselen says he hopes he can get him off to America after the elections. These trips abroad (in the limelight) are what he apparently chiefly relishes these days. Esselen even came to me a month ago to suggest a visit before the elections, but this he told me later was found impracticable. I asked the General himself about the matter the other day and he said that newspaper reports of an impending visit to America are "just talk," but that he anticipates going to London after the elections and thinks that at that time he might be able to make a quick visit across. His attitude towards the United States is chiefly that "after the war America will call the tune" (his own words;) that our constitution is definitely inferior to the British in not being so flexible; that he lives in fear of our again reverting to isolationism after this war; that in this connection he specially dreads the possibility of the end of the war coinciding with our Presidential elections; and that so far as regards our relations with South Africa, this is a British dominion. His mind is full of lore of all sorts, astronomical, historical, pre-historical, botanical, metaphysical. He thinks Africa the most interesting of all continents, and is likely to throw off at any time remarks which one is unable to forget, - as this about General de Gaulle: "He has a long face like a horse, a horse in blinders which can't see left or right but only straight ahead. He keeps on saying 'Je suis la France! Je suis la France!' But he isn't France at all, he is only a pip-squeak." And about the multiplication of our Governmental boards and commissions at home: "If America ever dies, she'll die of complications."

Affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

Pretoria, Union of South Africa
October 5, 1943

Dear Franklin:

I am continuing my letters from South Africa, though I fully realize that for you they can contain only a very marginal interest at this time.

There is a nice line somewhere in Robert Frost to the effect that "Yankees are what they always were." The same thing can be said for the South Africans. You will have enough of their history in mind to realize how true to form they are running now. Since I last wrote, General Smuts has won the national elections by a large majority, and it is now considered here that these elections have settled the "war issue." The main issue around which the present campaign for the provincial elections is being waged is accordingly not only a purely domestic one but the same old "racial" issue of Boer versus Briton which has been cardinal in South African history for centuries. The Government is making a great deal of post-war planning for reconstruction, rehabilitation, and even demobilization, but it has chosen to go to the provincial polls principally on its program of abolishing what is called "single medium" instruction in the schools, that is, instruction in one language only, English or Afrikaans. Essentially, this amounts to attacking the very citadel of Afrikaandom, whose leaders must keep alive in the younger generation a consciousness of the difference between the English and the Dutch elements or face the eventual loss of their political raison d'être. The war is occasionally mentioned in campaign speeches and editorials, but only incidentally.

Of course, this reversion to "politics as usual" is not without a basis in popular sentiment. To South Africans at large the war seems to be as good as over. Ever since the German threat to Egypt was removed, war consciousness here has been diminishing fast, and now that the front has crossed to Europe, is almost nonexistent. The war in the East, which once seemed important locally, as likely to affect Madagascar, is now not even front page news. Moreover, not only has there been a switch of popular interest back to domestic problems, but the attitude of the military has deteriorated as well. On the one hand, recruiting for overseas service is practically at a standstill. Though the authorities keep up a certain amount of tub-thumping, the response....

The President,
The White House,
Washington.

response is negligible. On the other hand, headquarters are being cut down and high ranking officers are leaving the defense forces to take jobs with reconstruction agencies, other officers are being allowed to resign to return to private business, and the spirit of the troops within the Union, as reported to me by both my Military and Naval Attachés, is getting lower every day.

All this may seem strange as a sequel to an election won on the war issue by a famous Field Marshal. But it must be understood that by the "war issue" here was not meant the question of whether to wage war with increased intensity, nor even whether to wage war at all. What was at stake, and what was settled, was merely the question of whether the Smuts Government was right, in 1939, in placing South Africa on the side of the Allies. The probability of that decision's meaning that when the war is over South Africa will be on the side of the victors, with all the advantages presumably to accrue, is what carried Smuts through to his overwhelming victory. He and his government know this, of course, and are therefore not presuming on that victory now by flying in the face of popular apathy as regards actual hostilities, but rather are trying to use it to consolidate a position on the home front which they have never had before. Briefly, believing that the vote on the war issue has shown that the forces of isolationism and reaction in South Africa are no longer as great as in the past, they are losing no time in attacking them where it hurts most, in their racial core.

Thus the winds of doctrines agitating South Africa today are very different from those blowing in the great world outside. Progressivism is thinking of the post-war, and Reaction of the pre-war world, and actuality as we know it is at a premium. General Smuts has gone abroad, and will doubtless talk much about his army there, as he does here in his speeches. He can do no other. But his army has clearly shot its bolt, in Abyssinia and Egypt, and is not likely to be of much account hereafter; and meanwhile, at home, the men he has left behind him have other fish to fry than South Africa's influence at the Conference of the Peace. They must find some way of carrying Smutsism in South Africa beyond the Smuts era. They must make the United Party stand for something other than the "war issue" now dead. They must see to it that when their leader comes home from personal triumphs abroad, he does not suffer the fate of Mr. Venizelos. He himself has given them a lead in this matter. They must concentrate on the need of South Africa for unity, unity above all, and then, reconstruction, rehabilitation - all these things may be added unto her. The dream of a united people and its influence on this continent, which he believes the greatest....

greatest of all continents, is what he has left them to work with. On the other hand, however, there is also a potent dream being emphasized by the Opposition, and its chief dreamer has not gone abroad. It is the dream of the good old days, a dream of patriarchal white supremacy, Kaffir servitude, and Boer Republican isolation, "Aforetime, in the days of peace, before the sons of the Achaeans came" - and let us say also the sons of Shem. It is by no means one of the least factors contributing to the bitterness of this domestic struggle, which now so eclipses the war in local eyes, that Dr. Malan as a personality, and despite his narrowness, towers head and shoulders above any Smutsite politician except Smuts. Beaten badly in the national elections, and probably to be beaten almost as badly in the coming provincial tests, he is yet a figure whose eventual comeback is so possible as to be dreaded still. He is the Satan of the Dutch Paradise Lost.

Under these circumstances, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that the South African industrial war effort languishes. It may be said, of course, that if South Africa is not producing much for the war there are other reasons for this than her own lack of interest in the world outside. She has been stimulated to produce chromite, and had the orders canceled; she has produced munitions which have found no market; and recently the shipping around the Cape has been so reduced that her ship repairing - perhaps her most useful contribution to the war so far - is faced with reduction too, through no fault of hers. But she can certainly do something by increasing her export coal production, and we have now been pressing for this over a period of months. That the desired results have not yet been obtained is again not wholly her own fault. Organizationally, she is at least fifty or sixty years behind the United States, for historical reasons, and psychologically her people do not move at our tempo. Also, we too are not infallible, and dislocation of shipping owing to the war, as well as occasional lapses in coordination between our services, American and British, may be somewhat to blame. Yet there has unquestionably been a lag which even an undeveloped country more keenly touched by hostilities would not have suffered to exist. Perhaps our new Joint Supply Council may be able to speed things up and get some results. In addition to coal, there is a possibility of South Africa supplying foods for export, and this, too, the Council will take up. With the good will and full comprehension of General Smuts and his government, these aims are being and will continue to be pursued, but they are too limited and too few to constitute much of a "war effort" on a national scale as we know it, and the fact remains that the real interest of the people is focusing here progressively rather on getting than supplying. With her feeling that the war, so far....

far as she is concerned, is virtually over, and in her very strong financial position based on gold, South Africa is thinking chiefly of importing things, even luxuries, and recruiting for the industrial war effort, like recruiting for the army, must be drummed up to exist.

It is easy to criticize, but this is a country of amazing contrasts. With a world figure at her head and a whole sub-continent as her area, she numbers in white population the equivalent of only a medium-sized large city at home, such as Philadelphia. To be fair while we are firm, I think we should remember these things. At least they will help to understand what would otherwise be inexplicable. Up to now South Africa has done fairly well in this war, considering her limitations. In spots she has actually done magnificently - as anyone would be forced to agree who should see the Honor Roll of a school like Bishop's at Cape Town - and, despite other spots not so brilliant, she has kept the Cape out of enemy hands over a critical period. As to her future contribution, aside from what she might do with the Bantus and the Zulus were her native policy different (and that would necessitate a whole different history), and what she might contribute economically were her house not founded almost exclusively on one industry (and that is also a product of her past, firmly established), her possibilities within her means are very small. Potentially rich in minerals but positively stricken in population, abnormally one-sided in economic development and socially riddled with problems whose answers are not in sight, what she has already contributed may be very nearly all she can contribute, and her present apparently premature preoccupation with things domestic may accordingly be in part, if not wholly, pardonable.

One thing which I have enjoyed above all in my experience here, and which I am sure you would yourself immensely appreciate, has been acquaintance with a number of South Africans who are still alive and active from the days of the Boer War. As was the case with our country in Revolutionary times, that great crisis produced an amazing crop of unusual men. You know the names of many who have died, and you know General Smuts personally. Others remain. Chief Justice de Wet, now administering the government, a kind of Cincinnatus, who would be Governor-General today but for his dislike of pomp and ceremony and his objection, as he told me himself, to being "paid too much and losing contact with his friends," Louis Esselen of General Botha's staff, now Smuts' chief political adviser, and others of their type, in the Parliament and without, are men cast in a heroic mold. They are the best of the real Boers, trained to the saddle, the gun, and the....

the frontier, with clear eyes still, and clear heads. Unfortunately, their children do not reproduce the mold. With the passing of Smuts' generation, South Africa with all her vexing problems before her, will be faced with an era of smaller personalities. There are, of course, a lot of good men among these, but the problems of South Africa today, though perhaps more difficult of solution than any in her past history, do not call so much for nobility of character as for other qualities and other qualities are what they are producing. The days of King Arthur and his Round Table, when "every chance called forth a noble knight," are no more in South Africa. The future looks petty and confused.

Affectionately yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

The color reproduction on the cover of these Notes is from the Victor Du Bois Collection of West African Art. The showing of this collection in April 1971 opened the new Baxter Art Gallery, the first permanent gallery of the Caltech Art Program. The exhibition had particular importance because, in launching a new phase of the art program, the show recognized the importance of work being done by various Africanists at Caltech.

Mr. Du Bois, a resident of the Ivory Coast and a member of the American Universities Field Staff, assembled the collection largely through his own trips into the African bush. A catalog of the collection may be obtained by writing Dr. David Smith in care of the Baxter Art Gallery. The price is \$10.

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